

History of The Hot Pots and Resorts Around Them



Jennifer Provost and Dennis Chatwin Jr. look into one of the large craters on North Homestead Drive.

The first white men on record to discover and explore Midway's ancient geyser basin complete with pots, cones, and warm springs was Mark Smith and Jesse McCarrell in 1859. These two men were among a party of 10 who first settled in the Heber Valley, formerly called upper Provo Valley.

Today these craters serve as a tourist attraction in the Midway area. Interest is shown in the geological find and the unusual formations.

These same strange lime rock mounds with hot water and rising vapor were a mystery surrounded by superstition to the Ute Indians who

roamed the valley long before the white men settled here.

The largest group of craters are located at the mouth of Snake Creek Canyon and extend about two miles. Most have hot water with the temperatures varying from 70 to 112 degrees. These thermal springs have a high lime content and some of the cone-shaped pots have sealed themselves shut.

The largest of the craters is located at The Homestead Resort. It rises out of the earth like a volcano and measures 15 feet in diameter at the opening. The depth is unknown. At one time, residents attempted to measure it by lowering a

weight into the hot water. They did not find a bottom at 150 feet.

Simon S. Epperson, a pioneer to the area and a town clerk for many years, recorded in his journal that one of the dry craters called Snake Creek Den was the hibernating place for hundreds of snakes. Between 400 and 500 rattlesnakes were killed in a single day. In the spring, the snakes appeared on the outside of the crater and formed into groups that would fill a bushel basket. The snakes would tie themselves into knots with their heads sticking out in all directions for protection.

Mr. Epperson recorded that he believed the country around these pots to be hollow because of the sounds caused by rumbling wagon wheels passing over it. The echoing sounds possibly comes from the existence of bedrock (calcareous tufa) located in many parts of Midway but more so in the area of the pots, there it is just beneath the ground surface. The thickness varies up to 70 ft.

For many years, the hot pots were thought to be useless. For the early settlers, agriculture was the primary land use. There was not much soil in these areas, mostly pot rock.

The early homesteaders did find a use for the small dry pots. These served as pig pens and shelter for other livestock.

The development of The Homestead Resort came quite by accident. The pots was owned in early times

by Simon Schneitter. He first got the idea of developing a resort from the interest people showed. They were an attraction to people from Provo who came in wagons to see the unusual craters. In 1886, Mr. Schneitter started the Schneitter Hot Pots by building a swimming pool and a two-story brick hotel known as the Virginia House. This building is still used today.

Another resort in Midway, featuring swimming and health baths, is The Spaa. This resort was known for many years as Luke's Hot Pots. They promoted their health baths that are thermally heated from hot pot springs of volcanic origin.

At One time, these pots sold for an Indian saddle horse and a second-hand sewing machine.

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